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November 26, 1917

INEQUALITY OF INDIVIDUAL WEALTH THE ORDINANCE OF PROVI-
DENCE, AND ESSENTIAL TO CIVILIZATION.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN DAVIS,

GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG,

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR,

THE HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE

A N N U A L E L E C T I O N ,

JANUARY 7, 1835.

BY JONATHAN M. WAINWRIGHT, D. D.
Rector of Trinity Church, Boston.

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New England Historic Genealogical Society

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

IN SENATE, JANUARY 8th, 1835.

Ordered, That Messrs. WILLARD, GRAY, and G. BLISS, be a Committee to wait on the Rev. JONATHAN M. WAINWRIGHT, and present him the thanks of the Senate, for the discourse delivered by him yesterday, before the Government of the Commonwealth, and to request a copy thereof for the press.

Attest,

CHARLES CALHOUN, Clerk.

*Inequality of individual wealth the ordinance of Providence,
and essential to civilization.*

S E R M O N .

Deuteronomy, xv. 11.

THE POOR SHALL NEVER CEASE OUT OF THE LAND.

FROM these words we must of necessity infer that there existed amongst the Jews a marked inequality in the distribution of wealth ; and moreover, that this condition of things was not accidental or temporary, but was to be regarded by them as perpetual. The same prominent feature being equally discernible in our own and in all other communities of civilized men, two questions obviously claim our attention. First, is this distinction between the rich and the poor essential to the improvement and happiness of man, or may we anticipate its removal at some future period, and under some more favorable combination of the elements of the social compact ? And again, if we cannot reasonably look forward to its removal, but are constrained to believe that it is a distinction arising out of the nature of man and the present order of God's providence, can such a con-

clusion be adduced as an argument against the wisdom and goodness of that great Being who created man, *and hath determined the bounds of his habitation.** Thus a very important and interesting subject of discourse is suggested to us by the text, and one which I trust will not be deemed inappropriate to the present occasion.

I am aware that it is a difficult and delicate one to treat of, and also that it may require the introduction of topics not generally regarded as within the province of preachers of the gospel. [A]† As, however, the civil authorities of the State must be supposed to acknowledge the truth and excellency of religion, when they come up to the house of God annually, in solemn form, as the opening act of their session, it would seem to be a fit opportunity to exhibit religion in what may be called its temporal aspect, as advancing and sustaining principles essential to the welfare and happiness of civil society. This I conceive it does, when it recognizes and sanctions the principle of inequality in the distribution of wealth amongst men; and when it declares, both in express terms, and by the particular duties it enjoins on the rich and on the poor, that this is to be acquiesced in as a permanent condition of society. But it may be said, that religion recognizes and

* *Acts, xvii. 26.*

† See Appendix.

sanctions many other things, which, in the present advanced state of knowledge and morals, are either not essential to the welfare of civil society, or else are absolutely detrimental to its true interests; as, for example, a kingly government, and the condition of slavery. It is incumbent therefore upon the advocate of religion, who believes that the declaration of the text will remain true while this state of probation lasts, to vindicate the Divine Benevolence in this respect; and to show, that if it is ordained that *the poor shall never cease out of the land*, it is so ordained because such an appointment is essential to the true happiness and progressive improvement of the human family. This will be the object of my discourse, and I respectfully request for it the candid and patient attention of this distinguished audience.

In pursuing my design, I shall, in the **FIRST PLACE**, interpret the broad assertion contained in my text, and suggest some important limitations that may be reasonably prescribed to it.

SECONDLY, I shall endeavor to prove that the inequality of condition, which it implies, is essential to the political, the intellectual, and the moral and religious improvement of the human race, and,

LASTLY, I shall point out how the more grievous and repulsive circumstances attending upon this con-

stitution of the social state, may be meliorated, if not entirely removed.

I. *The poor shall never cease out of the land.* Is this declaration of the inspired law-giver, to be regarded as exclusively applicable to his own country and people, or must it be extended to all nations, and to all future periods of time? We know that up to the present moment these words have been most truly prophetic of the condition of civilized man. Under every form of government, and in every varied state of society, distinctions, caused by the unequal distribution of wealth, have existed. Notwithstanding they have been often denounced as unjust and injurious, and efforts have repeatedly been made, both by legislative interference, and during the excitement of political commotions, to remove them; yet all has been unavailing. Nor have we any reason to believe that this condition of our being can be altered by any exertions of man, his own nature remaining what it is, and the arrangements of Divine Providence, in relation to him, continuing unchanged. Whilst one man is weak of body, and another possesses athletic strength; while the intellect of one is dull and inactive, and that of another bright and vigorous; while the energies of one are paralized by frequent and long continued sickness, and another is incited to constant activity by unin-

terrupted and elastic health—so long will *the rich and poor meet together** in human society ; and so long must we acknowledge that *the Lord is the maker of them all.**

These are causes sufficient to produce the effect, setting aside those that originate in the vices of men, as dissipated living, prodigality, improvidence, contrasted with the virtues of temperance, frugality and prudence. But notwithstanding the clearest indications that such is the ordinance of an overruling Providence, yet there have never been wanting those who have inveighed against it, and have thus either openly or by inference, charged God foolishly.† Some taking counsel of their own benevolent but visionary feelings, and wishing to distribute happiness more equally amongst men, have thought that this could be done by more nearly equalizing their outward condition ; others have been incited by a restless impatience under their comparative inferiority, and have hoped to extend their own boundaries by removing the ancient landmarks;‡ others, again, impelled by inordinate and unprincipled ambition, have been ever eager to catch the ear and secure the favor of the unthinking multitude, by flattering their ignorant prejudices, and inflaming their unhappy jealousies against those they esteem more favored by

* Proverbs, xxii. 2. † Job, i. 22. ‡ Proverbs, xxii. 28. Deut., xxvii. 17.

fortune than themselves. We need not look to past ages, nor to transatlantic countries, for such examples of enthusiastic and shortsighted benevolence on the one hand, or reckless and unprincipled avarice and ambition on the other. I do not think that in a community as intelligent as our own, and as well grounded in the great principles of moral and religious obligation, we are to apprehend any great danger from the prevalence of such false and pernicious doctrines. Still they should not be permitted to pass unnoticed. They should occasionally be brought forward to keep in general circulation the important considerations by which they are refuted ; and they should uniformly be reprobated, not simply because they are speculatively untrue, but because they are at war with the permanent interests and the true happiness of society. This point I shall presently have occasion to notice and illustrate. In the mean time it is necessary to state more distinctly what we are to understand by the assertion that *the poor shall never cease out of the land.*

Is the human race then doomed forever to groan under the load of evils and miseries heaped upon society in consequence of exorbitant, heartless, and luxurious wealth, on the one hand, and abject and squalid poverty, on the other ? Is the picture of *the rich man clothed in purple and fine linen, and who*

*fared sumptuously every day, and the beggar, Lazarus, laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table**—is this picture destined to find its prototype sooner or later in all countries, and in all succeeding generations? God forbid! I would not by such an admission, imply a heavy suspicion against the doctrine of a wise and merciful superintending Providence. I draw a far different inference from the actual operations of this Providence, as we read them in the past history and present condition of the human race.

I exult in the conviction that the whole tendency of civilized society is to improvement in knowledge, virtue and happiness. I see the elements in vigorous activity, that are producing this effect, in the spread of the Gospel, the multiplication of the Bible, the diffusion of education, the progress of the temperance reformation, the prevailing conviction that peace is the greatest of earthly blessings to nations, and last of all, but by no means the least of all, in the increasing attention paid to that valuable science which is yet destined to shed innumerable blessings upon the family of man, Political Economy. [B]

While many other evils attendant upon the social state are thus to be gradually meliorated, if not entirely removed, I cannot believe that the great and

* Luke, xvi. 19.

obvious one now under consideration, will remain untouched. We know that at present there exists a vast difference between nations, in regard to the distribution of wealth amongst their respective inhabitants. Compare the condition of the humbler classes of society in Italy or Ireland, with that of the same classes in England, France or Holland ; and then again, compare the proportions of the rich and poor, and the number of degrees between their relative situations in these countries, and in our own favored and happy land. The contrast is manifest, and it is produced by causes which men begin to trace out and understand. This knowledge will be constantly increased by awakened interest and close observation ; it will be disseminated by intelligent and philanthropic minds, and it will be applied more and more by individuals and by corporate and legislative bodies, to alleviating the sufferings of pauperism and to removing altogether the evils of a tolerated mendicity. The poor man will indeed still be found in every community, because riches and poverty are relative terms and indicate no absolute condition. We may reasonably hope, however, that at some future period in the progressive improvement of the human race, such a state as *suffering* indigence will be unknown. "These conditions, it has been well observed, are essentially distinct and

separate. Poverty is often both honorable and comfortable ; but indigence can only be pitiable, and is usually contemptible. Poverty is not only the natural lot of many in a well constituted society, but is necessary in order that a society may be well constituted. Indigence on the contrary is seldom the natural lot of any, but is commonly the state into which intemperance and want of prudent foresight push poverty ; the punishment which the moral government of God inflicts in this world upon thoughtlessness and guilty extravagance.”*

Why may we not with joyful hope look forward, to a state of far greater and far more diffused happiness and prosperity than the present, in reserve for our children’s children, if not for ourselves or our immediate offspring ? Why may we not even indulge a confident belief that they will find themselves in a community where depraved and reckless indigence will be unknown, or where if observed it will be regarded as a crime against society, and where neither suffering nor disgrace, nor any idea of unworthy inferiority will be attached to poverty—a community in which a man will be called poor, not because he is destitute of the means of a comfortable subsistence—not because rare and far distant opportunities are afforded him of relaxation

* Bishop Sumner’s Records of the Creation.

from severe toil for the purpose of bodily health, rational enjoyment or mental cultivation—not because he is deprived of the means of giving to his offspring every advantage for education which the development of their faculties may render desirable—but poor simply by contrast with his neighbor who has been endued with firmer health, or a more active and enterprising mind, or who has enjoyed more favorable opportunities for the exercise of his powers, or because these blessings have been bestowed upon his parents, and he has justly inherited the fruits of their successful labors, or because God by the inscrutable workings of his providence and for reasons wise and benevolent, though not obvious to the limited sight of man, has cast down one and lifted up another. For after all we must acknowledge that it is he, the author of our being and the ruler of our destinies, that permits or produces the variety of condition, as well intellectually and physically as in outward circumstances, that exists amongst men. *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifeth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.**

Both riches and honor come of thee and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand, is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all.†

* Psalm cxiii. 7.

† I. Chron. xxix. 12.

The power of God then acknowledged, we rely upon his goodness, justice and benevolence, to bring to pass in his own time, and by his own wise ordinances, the desirable changes in the social state to which we have just alluded. But are we led astray by a vain delusion, when we anticipate such results ? Is imagination suggesting some idle dream of perfectibility which shall never be realized in the waking existence of man ? We believe not. We may express our assurance in the words of the Psalmist when he says, *the needy shall not always be forgotten ; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.** We find ample encouragement also for our anticipations in such descriptions as that of the evangelical prophet when foretelling the universal peace, prosperity and happiness, that shall be realized upon the earth during the progress of the reign of King Messiah. *With righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth ; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.*† And the effect of this equitable and merciful administration of the laws by the rulers of the earth under the spiritual influence of the Prince of Peace, will be as represented

* Psalm ix. 18.

† Isaiah xi. 4. and 5.

in the bold figurative language of prophecy, that *the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.** *And they shall not hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain of the Lord; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*†

In such a state of society there will be heard no repining of the poor at the better success of the rich—no secret and corroding envyings will be pent up in their breasts—no outbreaking of mad and unprincipled efforts to reduce all to their own condition ; and at the same time, there will be no glorying in the distinction that wealth confers, no hoarding it up for selfish gratification ; but all the members of society feeling that its laws and regulations have been just, and have given to each, as far as was practicable, equal opportunities of success, they will know that their respective conditions have been influenced by the providence of God ; and the tendency of this conviction will be to render the poor man patient and contented, the rich humble, charitable and public spirited.

But here it may be demanded if such a change as this can be effected in the existing relations between the rich and the poor, and if we may reasonably

* Isaiah xi. 4.

† Isaiah xi. 9.

look for it as resulting from the progress of christian knowledge and virtue, why may not a still greater improvément be effected, why may not all inequalities amongst men as to outward condition be removed, and as we are all the offspring of one common parent, why may we not hope that the human race will in process of time be prepared for an equal distribution of wealth, and that this consummation, so devoutly wished for by many, will be actually realized at the auspicious opening of some millenial age ? Why ? Because we believe that constituted as the world is, such a modification of the social relations would not be practicable, nor if practicable would it conduce to the virtue and happiness of men as individuals, or to the progress of society at large. Moreover, as far as we can infer the designs of the Creator from the moral and physical capacities he has given to man, and from the theatre on which they are to be exercised, such was never his intention. If it be farther demanded, why in forming the world and its inhabitants, did he expose them to such pitiable and unequal conditions, and make it necessary to their happiness and improvement that they should appear to be treated by their common Father with such striking partiality ? To this objection we shall be ready to reply, when

any one will instruct us to account satisfactorily for the existence of physical and moral evil.

Here let me adopt the sentiments of a distinguished author of the present day : “I do not profess to explain why things were so ordered, that any advancement at all should be needful ; why mankind were not placed at once in a state of society as highly civilized as it was destined ever to be. The reasons for this are probably unfathomable by us in this world. It is sufficient for our present purpose, merely to remark the fact, that the apparent design of Providence evidently is, the advancement of mankind, not only as individuals, but as communities. Nor again do I profess to explain, why, in so many particular instances, causes have been permitted to operate, more or less, towards the frustration of this general design, and the retardation, or even reversal, of the course of improvement. The difficulty in fact is one which belongs, not to this alone, but to every branch of Natural Theology. In every part of the universe we see marks of wise and benevolent design ; and yet we see in many instances apparent frustrations of this design ; we see the productiveness of the earth interrupted by unfavorable seasons—the structure of the animal frame enfeebled and its functions impaired by disease—and vast multitudes of living beings, exposed, from

various causes, to suffering and to premature destruction. In the moral and political world, wars, and civil dissensions—tyrannical governments, unwise laws, and all evils of this class, correspond to the inundations—the droughts—the tornadoes, and the earthquakes of the natural world. We cannot give a satisfactory account of either; we cannot, in short, explain the great difficulty, which, in proportion as we reflect attentively, we shall more and more perceive to be the *only* difficulty in theology, the *existence of evil* in the universe.”

“But two things we *can* accomplish, which are very important, and which are probably *all* that our present faculties and extent of knowledge can attain to. One is, to perceive clearly that the difficulty in question is of no *unequal* pressure, but bears equally heavy on Deism and on Christianity, and on the various different interpretations of the Christian scheme; and consequently can furnish no valid objection to any one scheme of religion in particular. Even Atheism does not lessen our difficulty; it only alters the character of it. For as the believer in a God is at a loss to account for the existence of *evil*, the believer in *no* God, is equally unable to account for the existence of *good*; or indeed of any thing at all that bears marks of *design*.**

* Archbishop Whately.

Our subsequent reasonings then, are all to be grounded upon the nature of man and his present condition as we find them. Assuming these positions and also the great and important one, that the present is only a state of probation, the future life one of retribution, all material difficulties are removed; and we are prepared to contend, that the wise and benevolent designs of Providence in making our probation a moral discipline, are accomplished by creating those distinctions between men that are now under consideration.

2. I am thus lead to the **SECOND PART** of my subject in which I shall endeavor to prove, that inequality of condition amongst men in relation to wealth, is essential to the political, the intellectual, and the moral and religious improvement of the human race.

Be it specially observed, that my argument is founded upon the fact of the race of men being brought into the world with the greatest possible difference in their physical and intellectual endowments, and their existing in a state where both physical and moral evil are experienced. Upon such premises I contend, that the unequal distribution of wealth is not only a necessary and unavoidable consequence, but that it is essential to producing the greatest amount of knowledge, virtue and happiness.

1. We will first examine into the effect of this principle upon the political condition of man. By political condition, I mean the relations in which he is placed as a social being. Men have heretofore lived, and, in some remote and barbarous situations, do at present live together without any experience of the distinctions created by wealth. We also have some knowledge of communities where these distinctions have been removed by legislative interference. But no one conversant with this page in the history of our race, would venture to draw from thence an illustration of the benefits of a system of equalized property, except under the influence of wild romance, or of blind devotion to a theory.*

Let us however for a moment direct our attention to two opposite states of society, one probably the most enlightened, in which the principle of equalization was ever deliberately, and for any continued period of time put to the test ; the other approaching as near as possible to what is sometimes called the state of nature. Let us glance at the social relations as they existed in the republic of Lacedæmon, and as they now exist amongst the native tribes of our own country.

Who would consent to place himself under the

* Rousseau, Godwin and all this race of writers fall under one or other of these conditions.

laws of Lycurgus, and for the sake of the equal distribution of property which he effected, expose himself and his offspring to a destitution of domestic comforts, intellectual refinement, and all that softens, expands, gladdens and elevates the human heart, such as Sparta was subject to at its best estate? True the sons of Lacedæmon were brave and hardy, and nobly for a time did they maintain the freedom of their land, for to this object and this alone, all their physical and moral education was directed, and in reference to this and this alone the whole system of their policy was constructed. But it was only freedom from a foreign yoke that they enjoyed, their internal bondage was cruel in the extreme. It kept in chains, and beneath an iron sceptre, the noblest faculties and affections of the soul. And, moreover, in order to secure their own selfish independence, and at the same time maintain the false and forced principle that their misguided legislator introduced, they kept in the most abject slavery thousands of their fellow beings. To perform the various offices necessary to the comfortable subsistence of man, and such as are accomplished easily, naturally and humanely, through the operation of the varied conditions of society that civilization encourages and demands, the forty thousand Spartans were obliged to hold in subjection, and live in the dread of four hun-

dred thousand slaves.* So much for an equal division of property amongst what is called a civilized people.

But this principle is illustrated in another manner as operating freely and without constraint amongst the native tribes of our own country. And who to purchase their freedom would assume the manifold evils of their condition—its wandering life, its uncertainty, its exposure to constant danger, and to frequent and horrible famine, to say nothing of its utter privation of sciences and the arts, and all the social enjoyments of civilized man? And moreover look at their present wretched condition—how fast are they dwindling away. And what is the cause? Not so much the vices that contact with civilized life has unhappily exposed them to, as the want of that industry, enterprise, forecast, selfdenial, which the great principle of holding property in severalty always produces in a community of men. And this principle, left to its free operation for any considerable period of time, will inevitably produce inequality of condition.

But it may be said, that in countries where the distinctions caused by property exist, and where

* These numbers may not be accurate, but the proportions cannot be far from the truth. They are stated as given by Bishop Sumner, in his "Records of Creation." Maller's History, and Antiquities of the Doric race, translated by Tusnell and Lewis, vol. 2, gives full information upon this and all other points connected with the social condition of Sparta.

they are the most obvious, the greater proportion of the inhabitants are subjected to a bondage not less grievous than that of the Helots in Sparta, and are exposed to miseries, uncertainties and privations, as great as those endured by our Indian tribes. Witness Turkey, Russia, parts of Italy and Ireland. I reply, that in the first place, my argument is not responsible for the consequences following unjust and arbitrary distinctions, the remains of feudal oppression ; in the next place it requires that property should not only be free to follow its natural course, but also that the rights of property should be sacredly preserved ; and in the last place the argument may reasonably ask a just allowance in any particular case, as in that of Ireland, for bad and oppressive acts of legislation and excess of population. With these limitations, I would contend that inequality of circumstances amongst a people always produces the most desirable results in the reciprocal action of the social relations. We know that the whole tendency of things in a community is to such inequality, and that it requires violence on the part of governments to obstruct this tendency, and, moreover, that amongst the freest, the most intelligent and the happiest nations of the earth, the distinctions thus caused have always existed. From these facts which are indisputable, we might be authorised

to infer the truth of the great principle we contend for.

But follow out the consequences resulting from diversity in the condition of men, and you will see accumulated reasons to assent to and admire this ordination of Providence. No one who has for a moment thought of the subject can doubt, that in order to the comfort even, of civilized society, very many different occupations must be performed, and must be carried on at the same time—lands must be tilled, houses must be built, fabrics for clothing must be made, implements of various kinds must be formed, and vessels must be constructed and navigated. It is equally obvious that the division of labor is essential to giving full effect to these occupations. In addition to these employments there are various other trades and professions to be filled, and also different offices for the due maintenance of the laws—and without laws no civilized community can hold together. If you oblige every man to be his own mechanic, farmer, manufacturer and navigator, and to do his share of the magistracy upon some principle of rotation, it is obvious that we can none of us enjoy as many or as great advantages as we do under the present system; and it is equally obvious that all these various occupations receiving only the divided attention of an individual, must very fast go

backward, and the knowledge and dexterity, which men now possess in their various employments in proportion to the undivided attention they give to them, must be constantly and rapidly diminished. I take it for granted that no man, even in very moderate circumstances, would choose to relinquish the comforts and conveniences he now possesses in his humble habitation. He would not like to be deprived of his glazed windows which let in the light while they exclude the wind and the cold, or of the various domestic utensils of iron and earthen-ware in which his simple meals are cooked and served up, or the different fabrics of linen, cotton, silk, woollen and leather which supply himself and his family with clothing ; nor would he choose to exchange his convenient tools of trade for the stone axe and the flint knife of the Indian. Yet such would be the inevitable result were the benign and admirable principle of the division of labor to be banished from society. How then is it to be maintained—how? but by holding forth to every man a stimulus to activity, ingenuity and enterprise in the hope of bettering his condition. Many employments essential to the existence of civilized society are yet so unpleasant in themselves, that no one would undertake them but from the excitement of such a motive. But were all men to be made equal, and

were they obliged by the laws of society to continue so, there could be no such animating impulse to the exertion of our bodily or mental powers. Who is so ignorant of himself and of human nature as not to know that until we have secured the kind assistance of habit, labor of every description is irksome, and that the hope of advancing ourselves, is the exciting principle that overcomes our natural love of ease, and sharpens all the human faculties. Strike this out of the social state and we should deteriorate year by year, till we dropped down to the degraded level of savages. Now this important, this essential principle cannot subsist without the distinctions of rich and poor.

Again be it observed, that it is not now a question with us, or with any set of men capable of discussing the subject before us, whether the distinction of rich and poor shall be introduced. It actually exists, and can only be removed by violence. Were the option given by the all wise Creator to some set of men forming a new community, who were endowed with the same intellectual qualities and moral affections that we possess, but destitute of the knowledge and experience we have of the social state, I think it likely that, with the exception of some few ardent and ambitious spirits, they would say "let us all be equal." There would be something grateful to the

human heart in the apparent justice and benevolence of such an arrangement, and knowing nothing of the comforts and advantages of civilization, they would have nothing to regret, and they might live on in a state of mental apathy and mere animal enjoyment. But such a choice cannot now be given; we have acquired the knowledge and tasted of the comforts of civilized life. Are we willing to give them up? And for what? For an artificial equality in the goods of fortune alone—for do what we will we cannot make ourselves equal in intellect, in health, or in personal qualities, as beauty, strength and activity,—for a fancied advantage which would prove in the event to be an awful curse and a hateful condition of existence. Who that has enjoyed the delightful change of prospect, and felt the invigorating effects of varied exercise over hill and dale, would choose to be condemned to walk for ever after over one level, dull, unbroken plain? Who, that has experienced the animating impulse of successful enterprise and has toiled under the bright and encouraging hope of being richer, wiser and happier day by day and year by year, would give up this wakeful and exciting life, for one of unchanging sleepy mediocrity? Give us the opportunity of bettering our condition and we readily take with it all the hazards of failure and disappointment. There

is hardly an individual now on the stage of active life who would be willing to come to a full stand at this moment and never again be permitted to move. This is proved in the experience of every day in the conduct of all around us. The universal impulse is forward, and if it produces some evils in exciting ambition, envyings, jealousies, dishonesty and strife, it calls into existence a thousandfold more blessings in the bright and varied intelligencies, the hardy and ennobling virtues, the dauntless and persevering energies of our nature. Those, therefore, who would throw down the distinctions created by wealth, may justly be denounced as the deadly enemies of all human enterprise.

2. Nor are these distinctions in society less essential to its intellectual improvement. Knowledge, we may venture to say, is now prized by all men. Even those who are supposed to defend most warmly the levelling system are yet the professed advocates of knowledge. Indeed who, in the present day, would venture to stand up and deny, or even question, the reality of the benefits thus conferred upon man ? Now knowledge has heretofore been acquired and accumulated entirely through the operation of the principle of the division of labor. Were it not for this constitution of society, we could make no farther advances in science and the arts, and

should doubtless very rapidly lose what we now possess. It will not be disputed that we have vast advantages over men in the uncivilized state. Look for a moment at the contrast between us and them. They have not well constructed habitations filled with the conveniences and comforts of living, well cultivated fields and a profusion of vegetables and fruits, with a constant succession of new and improved varieties, their agriculture makes no advances, nor their implements of husbandry, war or the chase from father to son—they have no roads, bridges, railways to facilitate the intercourse of men and the exchange of commodities—when fatigued with labor, or confined by inclement weather, they are furnished with no intellectual employment and pleasure in the printed volume, they have no weekly and daily visitor in the form of a newspaper, coming in to tell them what is going forward in every part of the habitable globe—their means of storing up the wisdom of past ages and the events that have affected their political relations are only uncertain tradition, aided by few imperfect and perishing monuments. In these respects how immeasurable the distance between them and us? And why? Because they are destitute of science and the arts. And why are they thus destitute? Because they have never adopted the principle of the division of labor. And

why has not this great improvement been adopted by them? Because land has not been held in severalty by them, and they have not been excited to accumulation by the unequal distribution of wealth.

3. When we take up the argument in favor of our position, on the ground that this state of things in a community promotes the moral and religious improvement of the human race, we have a still greater advantage on our side. It has been contended by* one of the ablest and certainly the most eloquent of the advocates of the levelling system, that if all conditions of men should be reduced to an equality, the great incitements and opportunities to commit crimes would be cut off. There would be no fraud, theft, injustice, violence or avarice, when all men possessed the same proportion of the comforts and conveniences of life. Now this statement we believe to be utterly fallacious, and we reply to it that there could not possibly be a state of society where there existed no perceptible difference between men as to their possessions. The field of one would be a little more fertile or a little better watered, the cave or hut of another would be more commodious or better situated, another would possess newer or better implements of husbandry, or the chase than his neighbor. Or if in these res-

* Rousseau.

pects they could by any possibility be made and kept exactly alike, they must inevitably differ in other particulars not less essential to happiness—one would be healthier, handsomer, stronger, or blessed with a more numerous and promising offspring than his neighbor. Now while the nature of man remains what it is, these circumstances would furnish abundant occasions for the development of its evil propensities. Theft, fraud or envying, are the same intrinsically and produce the same evil effects upon the moral constitution, whether excited by great or small things. To accomplish the good anticipated, the change must be produced in the individual minds and consciences of men, no human power can so alter their external state as to effect it. Besides, granting that it would follow as a result from the levelling system, that occasions for crime would be lessened, is it not obvious that at the same time the opportunities for the cultivation and display of the noblest virtues that adorn our nature would be cut off? What could we know of integrity, perseverance, industry, generosity, beneficence, humility, patience, self-denial? That adversity is the school of virtue, has been the favorite maxim of the wisest and best even of the heathen philosophers. And it is a fact that all those great writers who have treated of the subject of virtue, discussed the nature and

obligations of duty, and unfolded the moral and intellectual capabilities of our nature, have lived in ages and in countries, where distinctions in the outward condition of men, and the painful consequences that follow them, have been most marked. Indeed this state of society has furnished them with the means of observation, and has suggested to them the great principles of morals, and exhibited to them these principles in action for their delineation. Were the circumstances of men equalized, their intellectual and moral faculties would become feeble and sluggish, and the state of the moral world would be analogous to that of our physical earth, were the whole reduced to one unvaried plain. The whole atmosphere then being one dense, unwholesome vapour, the whole land, one dead and dreary level, the whole ocean, one waveless and stagnant pool, our world would be fit only for those huge misshapen creatures, the next remove from senseless matter, such as geologists have discovered, and such as existed ere the Almighty Architect broke up the fountains of the great deep, and caused the mountains and hills to pierce the skies and condense the vapours for refreshing showers, the healthful winds to blow about them, the joyous rivers to pour down from their summits, carrying verdure and fruitfulness to the humble valleys beneath, and thus rendering it

capable of supporting active life in varied and countless forms of beauty and utility to man.

If we turn our attention to the enlarged sphere of duty that christianity has opened to man, and consider the elevated, moral and intellectual character which it points out to him, and for which it is designed to prepare him, it is more clearly demonstrable, that equality of condition was never intended to be the element in which the christian was to be trained. There was indeed for a short period, and amongst a few of the early disciples of the Saviour, a community of goods, but this arose from local and temporary causes. It was never required or recommended, and it never prevailed. It is repugnant even to the spirit of the gospel, which demands the cultivation of tempers of mind such as charity, self-denial, humility in prosperous circumstances, patience in adversity ; and these can be cultivated only in a state of society where *the rich and the poor meet together*, and where it is devoutly acknowledged that *the Lord is the maker of them all*. As however the sincere, the pious and consistent christian can never be found amongst those who would do violence to the order of God's providence, and for a selfish advantage or a problematical good, undermine the foundation of all social institutions, we need push this part of the argument no farther.

The unequal distribution of wealth then, we believe to be not only an unalterable consequence of the nature of man, and the state of being in which he is placed, but also the only system by which his happiness and improvement can be promoted in this state of being. We do not deny that there are evils attending it, and that in some countries it has been fostered by artificial and injurious regulations, until it has become oppressive and unreasonable. The principle itself is fundamentally true and just, but it may be, and often has been, pushed to such an extreme as to be detrimental to the best interests of society. When in any country there are only two classes, the very rich and the very poor, or when the tendency of political regulations is—to produce this effect, as is the case under all aristocratical governments, the consequences must be bad. The middling class, as it is sometimes called, that is, the portion of the community that lies between the two extremes of riches and poverty, is its strength, intelligence and virtue. Of course we may infer, that that country is the most prosperous and happy which has the greatest proportion of this class of citizens. It is one evidence, and we may assert it to be the strongest of the value of our public institutions, that they have produced this effect, and that in no country on the face of the earth, is the midd-

ling class as relatively large as in our own. How then are we to maintain ourselves in this enviable condition ? Or if, as is feared by some, we are gradually declining from it, and individuals amongst us are becoming too rich, by the accumulation of capital, and others getting to be too poor and threatening to become burdens upon society, how are we to remedy the evil and prevent its recurrence ? These are momentous questions. Can we accomplish the object, and keep the happy medium through legislative interference, by checking the increase of capital, by forcing the wealthy under a process of unequal taxation to give up a portion of their super-abundance, or by an agrarian system of the division of property ? None but a madman, an ignorant enthusiast, or an unprincipled demagogue could propose this latter remedy. Nor will the others be tolerated for a moment by sound and enlightened judgment. As to an equal division of property by some act of legalized violence, it would avail just as much as a child's play in drawing squares and circles upon a sandy beach, the returning tide of human passions, enterprize and industry, (and return it would as certainly as ocean ebbs and flows) would sweep the whole away, and leave the surface marked as before by unequal ridges. If we would save the structure of society from utter dissolution, maintain

inviolate our civil and religious liberties, and preserve ourselves from political dangers, awful and incalculable, let us most sacredly guard the rights of property. This is the palladium of nations, this is the pledge of their improvement in all the arts that civilize and adorn our nature, this is their security for advancement in morals and religion. Once touch the rights of property, let it be felt that men are impeded and harrassed in their efforts to obtain it, that its possession is insecure, and that portions of it may be taken from them by unequal taxation, and you immediately stop enterprise, and with enterprise the progress of knowledge, and with the progress of knowledge, that also of virtue—and then where is the happiness of such a community ? It must be torn by intestine commotion, or if this is kept under by the military arm of a strong and despotic executive, it must prepare to see its commerce sicken and die, its agriculture decay, its manufactories silent and in ruins, its schools deserted, its roads impassable and infested with banditti, and all its institutions relapsing into a state of Turkish barbarism.

What then ? are there no precautions to be taken against the evils which arise from the unequal distribution of wealth, and no remedies which may be applied to alleviate or remove these evils, when

they begin to exhibit themselves ? Yes, doubtless there are, and a brief consideration of some of them is intended in the **THIRD** and last part of my discourse in which it was proposed,

3. To point out how the more grievous and repulsive circumstances attending inequality of condition in a community in regard to wealth may be meliorated if not entirely removed.

The leading objects to which the attention of wise and philanthropic men has been directed, and which should now more universally awaken the strenuous solicitude of the friends of humanity, are three ; the promotion of industry ; the extension and improvement of the means of education ; and the dissemination of christian truth.

In all these departments, much may be effected by individuals, more perhaps than by legislatures. An active and intelligent mind imbued with sound principles, and warmed with true benevolence, can accomplish great things. By such noble spirits, governments even are enlightened, are roused to a sense of their duty, and are instructed in its nature. How much has already been accomplished by them ! All great principles by which the welfare of the human race is promoted, are struck out as it were, in private meditation ; and the fire thus kindled in solitude, burns up like a beacon light upon a lonely moun-

tain, and on the neighboring eminences there are ever men upon the watch, and they catch the bright signal and repeat it till it is communicated in rapid succession to every hill top, and at last the deep and distant vallies glow with the glad reflection from a thousand intellectual fires. Knowledge thus produced and widely disseminated must reach, and must influence, and ultimately control public bodies of delegated authority. A great encouragement this to intelligent and benevolent individuals, who have the good of their country and the human family at heart. Let them proceed, and by their individual labors, and by their associated efforts in societies, excite their fellow beings to industry, knowledge and religion, and great shall be their reward—great in the applause of the good and wise of the earth, greater in the approbation of conscience, but unspeakably the greatest of all, in that glorious kingdom where *they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.**

1. The first point to be looked at is the promotion of industry. Private example, the animating effect of fairs, exhibitions, and rewards held out by agricultural and other kindred institutions, have accomplished much, and very much more may rea-

* Daniel xii. 3.

sonably be anticipated from these sources. But legislative bodies should by no means be indifferent to this important subject. They can at least encourage industry by abstaining from throwing any thing in the way of its free exercise. How much, or what they can do by positive encouragements is a disputed question, and one of very difficult solution. The desire of bettering his condition is an active principle in man, and his intelligence in this respect, is naturally so clear, that he wants but opportunity to exercise his powers, and the full assurance that all which his honest exertions produce, will be secured to him, and every thing will be accomplished that we can reasonably desire. Now in our own happy country, every man enjoys this glorious assurance. And never, oh never may the day, the dreadful day, arrive, when the poorest of the citizens of these United States can justly say, that he is oppressed by the rich, or when the richest can for a moment doubt, whether or not his well earned and legally obtained treasures shall be wrested from him by popular violence, or shall subject him to unrighteous and illegal exactions. Now we are safe in the security of the rights of property. God preserve to us and to our children for ever this inestimable blessing. But as regards a free and full opportunity given to every man, to exert his powers

and employ his capital have we yet arrived at an equally permanent and prosperous state? I fear not. How to reconcile the entire freedom of commercial enterprise, which is of unspeakable importance to the advancement of such a country as ours in wealth intelligence and the arts of life, with the encouragement of domestic industry, which is a paternal duty that every citizen has a right to demand from the government under which he lives, is a grave and difficult problem. It is obvious that we have not yet solved it. But I dare not touch upon the higher questions to which such a discussion would lead. There are too many interested in it, and too much at stake to allow it to slumber for a month or even a day. I may, however, be permitted to turn my attention to those who have not perhaps so many to advocate their cause—I mean what are called the working classes. I do not like or approve the appellation, for it suggests a distinction between the members of a community, which does not in reality exist. The merchant who exerts the thought and plies the pen of a busy correspondence, labors as hard as the farmer at the plough; and the professional man, and the man of study, works as painfully, and for as many hours as the humblest mechanic. I adopt the term however in compliance with custom. Now how shall the working classes

in a community be stimulated to industry? There is but one way. Promote all measures that are calculated to secure to them high and certain wages. I confess that I most sincerely rejoice, when I hear of measures or events, the effect of which is, to raise the price of any labor whatever, provided always that illegal and irresponsible combinations and meetings are uniformly to be deprecated by the friends of justice and good order. The raising the amount of wages in any country by a judicious and equitable process, is the most feasible, the most natural, the most unexceptionable mode of removing the painful distinctions created by wealth. When the portion of a community employed in manual labor is well paid, of course it will be well fed, conveniently lodged and comfortably clothed. It is then prepared to become constantly more intelligent. It will abstain from low habits and sensual recreations. Its demand will be for purer and more refined pleasures. It will learn prudence and forecast, and will see that industry and economy in health, and in early life, will secure comfort and independence in sickness and in old age. And it will be taught by frequent and striking examples, that the rich and the poor are travelling one common road, and are constantly passing and repassing each other, the one often ascending the hill with painful and slow

steps, the other going down with a rapid and headlong descent, and that the barriers and obstacles we meet with in our upward progress, are frequently placed there by our own fault or folly. The working classes in a community thus enjoying all the substantial comforts of life, experiencing the rewards of industry and the excitement of accumulation, relishing intellectual pleasures and the pure satisfaction of virtuous conduct, will they not sensibly feel that they have a deep pledge in the political fabric, and will they not be prepared to guard it with jealous care, and will they not be far superior to the romantic follies and insidious devices of those who would tear away its very foundation, security of property ? Yes, most assuredly. And therefore every man in the community has a solemn interest in increasing the gains, and thus elevating the condition of the working classes. Whatever be his occupation, or the employment of his capital, he should feel even a personal interest in giving efficiency to such measures. Should it be the case, which is not however at all likely, that his own profits are somewhat diminished, let him nevertheless remember, that if a small stream is diverted, it renders the great reservoir more secure. But if those who think they own all the waters, and can control all the privileges, will resist with a determined and jealous care the form-

ing of any outlet, let them not vainly imagine that their embankments will stand for ever. If they do not burst by the superincumbent weight, the hand of violence will undermine them, and they will one day rush down in precipitous ruin. But how are wages to be kept up without protection from competition with foreign, tax-ground and pauper-eaten nations? And if you protect against the introduction of their fabrics, how can you protect against the influx of their ignorant, needy and worthless population, coming in to compete with the earnings of your own lawful born children, and of course taking the bread from their mouths? But I touch on dangerous and shaking ground, and feel that I have not knowledge of the sound places for the feet to stand on, or skill or strength to force my way through the dark and tangled forest, that broods over this as yet impervious swamp. I entertain the fullest confidence however, in the principle itself, and would follow fearlessly to where it leads.

INDUSTRY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED BY MAINTAINING WAGES OF ALL KINDS AT A LIBERAL STANDARD.

But then on the other hand, men must be left to their own energies, and must understand and feel that they must rely upon their own exertions for support, and that there is nowhere any generous hand or well endowed institution, to pamper them

in idleness and vice. No one thing has tended more to aggravate the evils caused by the existing distinction between the rich and the poor, than the well meant efforts made by the one to alleviate the miseries of the other. By an unenlightened and perverted liberality, the extent of pauperism has been increased and its miseries aggravated. It is now time for us to make a broad distinction between the means by which real and inevitable distress is to be relieved, and those injudicious attempts which operate as a bounty to encourage the idle and dissolute. It is the duty of all who wish to exercise a genuine philanthropy, to examine rigidly the tendency of every institution for whose support they are called upon to contribute, and to question very closely every single applicant for charity. Every sum given to the idle and dissolute beggar, is so much lost to the purposes of true benevolence, and in addition to this, it is so much given to increase the evils of mendicity. So with charitable institutions, if their tendency be, as is sometimes the case, to afford an anticipated asylum to those, who by indolence and vice have reduced themselves to distress, then all that goes to support such institutions increases the very evils they were designed to remedy. This indeed is a very perplexing as well as important subject to treat of, and we have hardly

yet obtained a sufficient amount of facts and observations to direct us to positive results. Amongst ourselves, however, we have the satisfaction of believing, that the mistakes committed have been very few, the good accomplished very great. Our almshouses which are *houses of industry*, our dispensaries to give medicine and attendance to the sick poor, our hospitals to receive them when suffering from casualties or from chronic or violent diseases, our asylums to protect their fatherless and motherless offspring, our provident institutions to beget in them the spirit of economy and to husband for them its results, and in our chief cities a board of visitors and ministers at large, to instruct and comfort them and to relieve their temporal wants with a discriminating benevolence—all these we must regard as most praiseworthy institutions, and most unexceptionable modes of lessening the evils flowing from the unequal distribution of wealth.

2. Another means of alleviating these evils, is by improving and diffusing education.

You may remember the forcible remark of one of the most eloquent men and distinguished statesmen of the past age—that “education is the cheap defence of nations.”* I would adopt and enlarge upon it, and say that it is their defence, not merely from external

* Burke.

foes by leading them to fight valiantly for that beloved country whom they acknowledge to be the author of their intellectual as well as physical being, but their defence also from inward danger, arising from corrupt principles, vicious practices, pernicious maxims of government, and prevailing ignorance, that can easily be wrought upon and made the tool of wicked and ambitious demagogues. Were the people of a country generally well instructed, for example, in sound principles of political economy, is it not obvious that a most favorable influence would be exerted upon their habits, and also upon the acts of their legislature ? And not only so, could there any danger arise from the false but plausible maxims of those who talk so loudly about equalizing the condition of man. Would not the fallacy of all such doctrines be at once understood, and those, who dared to advance them, be at once detected and shunned as the worst enemies to their country and their race. But once give to the poor man an insight into the structure of civilized society, and into the principles by the operation of which the comforts the intelligence and the whole well being of a community are produced and preserved, and he would feel that his own safety and happiness are no less involved than those of the rich, in maintaining inviolate the rights of property. He would see that the lev-

elling principle once introduced, although a very small amount might be for a time added to his income, yet even this could not last, for the stimulus to individual accumulation taken away, the capital of a country could not grow, but must be diminished, and every one's share would of course be lessened. He would see also, that he who talks about the danger, the tyranny, the cruelty of capital, talks folly or wickedness, and argues as much to the purpose as the inhabitant of Egypt would do, who, when the Nile overflows, should inveigh against those who providently inclose a portion of the fruit-bearing waters in reservoirs, to be cautiously and timely let out, when the river has disappeared, and the lands are becoming dry, and the vegetation begins to be parched with drought. With the reduction or loss of capital, manufactories must cease, all works of public improvement must be put an end to, the whole community must step by step go backward ; and instead of the comforts which the poor man has around him, and the degree of intelligence he enjoys, and the hope of bettering his condition by which he is animated to exertion, he must at last drop down to an ignorant, comfortless, and hopeless state of existence. Yes ! it can be proved to a demonstration that only the worthless and depraved members of a community, could gain

any thing by a general division of property ; and even their advantage would be only momentary, for the same wasteful and negligent habits and vicious morals would soon reduce them to want again. Now education alone, can produce this enlightening of the public mind. We have done much in this glorious cause, as individuals and as a body politic, but more, very much more, remains for us to do in both capacities. The system of instruction in our public schools, is by no means what it should be. It is neither thorough enough nor extensive enough. I am not of the opinion maintained by some, that it is sufficient for those who depend for subsistence upon manual labor, to be instructed simply in the common branches of education. No, I would use all exertion to impart to them every power of knowledge, and every delight of literature. I would make for them intellectual pleasures, as common as the air they breathe, and as free to them as to any other class of persons in the community. I would allow of no artificial and impassable barrier between men, and no distinction but that which intelligence and moral worth produces. I see not why science, letters, and the mollifying arts, may not be the common property of the farmer and mechanic, with the professional man and the merchant. And if they enjoy a community of pleasures, and have common topics of

conversation in their occasional intercourse, and find that the same books, and the same ennobling pursuits are open to them all, will they not be drawn to each other by a common feeling, and will not all painful and repulsive contrasts between them, be soon done away. Then we shall hear no more about those unjust and injurious distinctions between working men, and those who do not labor with their hands. All will know that intellectual labor is at least as wearying to the flesh, and as exhausting to the human faculties as manual labor. As I before said, the invidious distinction thus attempted to be made is utterly groundless, and is calculated only to excite unhappy jealousies between classes of men, whose interest is a common one, and who should be drawn together by the closest sympathies of brotherhood.

But in addition to enlarged opportunities, ample time should be allowed to what are called the working classes, for the cultivation of their minds. Manual labor should never be permitted to occupy the whole of a man's existence, that is not spent in sleep and refection, nor should it ever be carried to undue fatigue or exhaustion. What I mean to say is, that men should not be made, nor should they permit themselves to be made, drudges and slaves. They are intellectual beings, and they

must vindicate their title to this character, by demanding sufficient time and bodily strength, and unexhausted mental powers, to improve the intellect day by day. He is an enemy to the true interests of his race, who would wish to see his fellow beings worked till they have no desire but to eat and retire to stupid repose, and again wake and labor and eat, and be again exhausted, till sleep becomes the first wish of nature—and meantime the mind lies fallow, or is overrun with weeds—the immortal mind that places the humblest mechanic on a level with the princes of the earth, and gives him powers, hopes and lofty enjoyments, that money or station cannot secure, and that poverty, except the most abject, cannot take away. [c.]

3. But the most effectual alleviation of the evils attendant upon the unequal distribution of wealth, is to be anticipated from the dissemination of the truths of the gospel. Christianity has a specific action in lessening the evil complained of; for by promoting industry, sobriety, integrity, and all the habits that advance individual prosperity, it lessens the number of the poor: so much so, that in a community of sincere devoted Christians, we might be sure that suffering indigence would be unknown. It could never proceed from idleness or profligate habits; and sickness or unavoidable misfortunes

would be relieved as soon as known. But besides its specific action, as we may term it, in lessening the relative numbers of the rich and poor, it would remove all the painful consequences of these distinctions. For teaching clearly as it does, that this world is only a preparation for another and a better, and that in reference to this great purpose, it has been formed and fitted to be a place of moral discipline, men would acquiesce in the wisdom and mercy of such appointments. If blessed with abundance they would use it as stewards of God in promoting the welfare of their fellow creatures—if suffering comparative privations, they would derive from them the discipline of patience and resignation. All would feel assured that these distinctions are to terminate here, and are to pass away with sublunary things; and all being therefore principally anxious to place their treasures where their hearts would then be, pride, avarice and luxury on the one hand, envy, fraud and repining on the other, would be done away. Christianity is the bountiful dispenser of social blessings, the merciful healer of social evils. Those, therefore, who are laboring, planning and contributing to disseminate the truths of the gospel, are not merely seeking the future and eternal salvation of men, though this is and should be their chief object, but they are carrying into effect the

most certain and efficient plans for improving their temporal condition. Christianity will not make men all equally rich, or equally exalted in station, any more than it will cause a perfect resemblance between them intellectually and physically, but it can and it will meliorate the evils which flow from this state of things, because these evils, after all, are not inherent in the circumstance of inequality of condition, but in the temper of mind with which men view it and submit to it. Now Christianity was designed expressly to operate upon this temper, to renew and to purify it, to give it spirituality, and to endow it with virtues for time, and with bright hopes and ample preparations for eternity.

In submitting the subject thus discussed to my distinguished and respected hearers, I have the satisfaction of believing, that there is no community in which the important principles it involves will be more readily understood and received. And may I not, in conclusion, be permitted to express my conviction that there is no portion of the habitable earth, that has heretofore more happily illustrated the benign operation of these principles, and to offer up my fervent prayers, that they may never be invaded or destroyed by misguided benevolence, unprincipled ambition, or the headstrong folly of political factions.



APPENDIX.

[A.]

WHY should not ministers of religion, as well as the other members of the community, take a lively interest in those studies that relate to civil society and unfold the principles upon which its advancement and happiness in temporal things mainly depend? But not to the physical condition of man, does the science of Political Economy, properly considered, have sole or chief reference; his moral and intellectual improvement is deeply involved in almost every discussion connected with it. Moreover Christianity is eminently the religion of civilized man, and will only consent to live and flourish in connexion with civilization. It sets in motion all the elements that improve the social condition, and reciprocally is itself advanced or retarded by the movements of the community into which it is introduced. To be convinced of this, one need only read the admirable arguments and illustrations, that the intelligent and philanthropic James Douglass of Cavers in Scotland, has brought forward; especially those contained in his little work, which cannot be too well known or too generally perused among Christians, "Hints on Missions." That Political Economy is a science in a high degree interesting and valuable to the philanthropist and the Christian, as well as to the politician, is now felt and acknowledged by some of the most pious and eminent divines. The distinguished Dr. Chalmers has given it his serious notice, and although we are greatly indebted to him for awakening attention to an important subject, and for valuable suggestions in his "Christian and Civic

Economy of large Towns," yet we cannot think that he has treated of Political Economy with his usual discrimination or intellectual power. In the established Church of the sister nation, there is also a Divine, justly entitled to our gratitude, for the efficiency with which he has directed his powerful and sagacious mind to this field of intellectual labor. I refer to the present Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Whately. His lectures on Political Economy while Professor of this department in the University of Oxford, are admirable, and well deserve to be more generally known in this country. So impressed was he with the importance of the subject, which he understood so well, and had written upon in so luminous a manner, that immediately after being placed at the head of the Irish Church, one of his first acts was, to establish in the University of Dublin, at his own charge, a Professorship of Political Economy. The first fruits of this act of truly enlarged and Christian benevolence, we have just received in the lectures of Professor Longfield.

In the preface to his lectures on Political Economy, Professor Whately avows, that his chief inducement to offer himself as a candidate for this chair in the University, and his first object in his course of introductory lectures, were to remove the prejudices against Political Economy, existing in the minds of some persons as being inimical to religion. "It has been my first object, says he, to combat the prevailing prejudices against the study; and especially those which represent it as unfavorable to religion. Convinced as I am, that the world, as it always in fact has been governed by political economists of some kind, must ultimately be under the guidance of such as have systematically applied themselves to the science, I could not but regard it as a point of primary importance, to remove the impression existing in the minds of many, both of the friends and the adversaries of Christianity, as to the hostility between that and the conclusions of Political Economy." This object in my humble opinion, he has accomplished in a

most able and triumphant manner, and I most sincerely wish that some enterprising publisher, would confer a favor on the American public, by putting forth an edition of his interesting and instructive lectures. While suggesting this, two other works occur to my mind as having the same tendency, and as deserving far greater attention than they can receive, while only to be obtained in the few and expensive copies of the English editions, which have reached this country. I refer to the "Progress of Society," by the late Professor Hamilton of Marischal College and University of Aberdeen. Although written in reference to a state of society very different from our own, yet the principles it discusses, and the information it gives in many points, are of universal application. The other work is "A treatise on the Records of the Creation, and on the moral attributes of the Creator, with particular reference to the Jewish History, and to the consistency of the principle of population with the wisdom and goodness of the Deity. By John Bird Sumner D.D., Lord Bishop of Chester,"—a learned, ingenious and eloquent treatise. I cannot doubt but that these works would repay the cost of their republication, and I feel assured that they would amply reward the attention given to them by those who are interested in the subjects of which they treat.

[B.]

I do not think that I overrate the value of this science, when I place it not least amongst the means by which the human race is to be made wiser, better and happier. The bettering the condition of man, is the very object to which it directs all its investigations, and if some of these appear at first view to be exclusively devoted to his temporal and perishing state of being, yet followed out into their legitimate connexions and dependencies, they will be found to bear closely upon his in-

tellectual and immortal nature. My learned and much valued friend, Professor McVickar of Columbia College, N. Y., in his concluding remarks to his republication of McCulloch's outlines of Political Economy, adopts this forcible language, in which I entirely coincide. "Without incurring the charge of enthusiasm, it may be maintained to be the redeeming science of modern times—the regenerating principle that in connexion with the spirit of Christianity, is at work in the civilized governments of the world, not to revolutionize, but to reform. It is to states what religion is to individuals, the "preacher of righteousness,"—what religion reprobates as wrong, Political Economy rejects as inexpedient—what religion condemns as contrary to duty and virtue, Political Economy proves to be equally opposed to the peace, good order, and permanent prosperity of the community." Should not such a science be made more universally the subject of attention? Should not its rudiments be taught in our schools, and its higher principles in our colleges? And yet how is it neglected in both? Not universally in our Colleges—in Columbia College N. Y., it has been long and ably taught. It is a prominent part of the course of instruction in Washington College, Hartford, and very possibly in other of our higher seminaries of learning, although I am not informed upon this point. But what has been done, and is doing for it, in our own favored and beloved university? If in this particular department there is not an adequate endowment, to support regular instruction in so important a science, surely there cannot be wanting the means, in our intelligent and noble spirited community, to accomplish this object. Deeply interested as merchants, manufacturers, agriculturalists, capitalists are, in having correct views upon their various interests distributed throughout the community, will they not all cheerfully aid in maintaining a system of instruction which shall effect this purpose? Where can this better be done than within the venerable walls of Harvard?

"I trust, says Professor Whately, that while due encour-

agement shall still be afforded to those more strictly *professional* studies which conduce to the professional advancement in life of each individual, Political Economy will, ere long be enrolled in the list of those branches of knowledge, which more particularly demand the attention of an endowed University. The time is not I trust, far distant when it will be regarded as discreditable, not to have regularly studied those subjects, respecting which, even now, every one is expected to feel an interest—most are ready to adopt opinions, and many are called on to form practical decisions.” The suggestion is as important to enlightened and liberal minded persons here, as to those on the other side of the Atlantic. Let us not be behind hand in availing ourselves of it.

Great, and doubtless to a very considerable extent, well founded prejudice has been excited against Political Economy in consequence of the conflicting theories that have been advanced in regard to its fundamental principles, and the dull, confused, pedantic, and often mystical way in which it has been treated. There are very many practical men, who are even now too apt to regard it as a system of solemn quackery. And when we see some of them, as we do occasionally in conversation, and in the debates of our legislative assemblies, come directly at sound conclusions by a process of simple, direct and forcible argument, without any knowledge of a word that has been written in books, concerning exchanges, value, price, wages, capital, &c., we can hardly be surprised at such an impression gaining ground, unfortunate and mistaken though it be. But such occurrences are no more valid as an argument against pursuing Political Economy as a science, than the fact that such men as Franklin have made great discoveries in physical science, without the regular mental discipline of the schools, is an argument against having Professorships of Mathematics and Natural and Experimental Philosophy in our colleges. All they prove is, that now and then, men of powerful and discriminating minds rise up, who can do more without the aid

of systematic education, than the common order of men can do with it. But education has a tendency to remove the inequality produced by variety of natural endowments, and therefore it is just as well as benevolent to promote it.

No one has yet mastered the Science of Political Economy. It is probably the most difficult and complex of all the moral sciences, and when some gifted mind shall disencumber it of paradoxes, ambiguous phraseology, and subtle and unprofitable questions, and shall exhibit its fundamental principles in clear and bold relief, it will be discovered that it is, at the least, as interesting and important as any one of them, and perhaps the best calculated of all, to give to the mind that discipline which shall render it discriminating, practical and efficient in conducting the transactions of real life.

Teachers in this department and their books are fast improving : witness the ones referred to in the preceding note. And let it not be regarded as the prejudice of friendship that would speak in terms of unqualified praise of the style of writing and the method of argument and illustration as exhibited upon the subject in the "Manual of Political Economy, by Willard Phillips," without, however, choosing to be responsible for any opinion upon the conclusions to which this author arrives on some disputed points. The treatise itself, though obviously the fruit of extensive reading and profound thought, has less of the parade of learning, and the confusion arising from a careless use of language, and more of condensed and valuable information relating to the subject, in connexion with our own country, than any that has yet appeared.

[C.]

Upon the important subject of wages, laborers and their condition, see Chapter vii. of Phillips' Manual of Pol. Econ. replete with judicious and philanthropic suggestions. Especially see the eloquent passage p. 151. *Laborers should be able to save.*

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